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1959-12-22, Bette to Parents

Bette J. Barto

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Subject Terms

Women and the military, Women and war, United States -- Air Force, United States -- Army -- Air Forces, Photographs, Armed Forces -- Correspondence, Correspondence -- Vietnam War -- 1961-1975, Christmas

Summary

This collection contains 139 correspondence from Maj. Bette J. Barto, USAFE to her parents while serving as a nurse during the late 1950s and 1960s. Also included are three photographs, one special orders document, and one marriage license. In several cases, Bette refers to her parents as "Lizzie" and "Hugh Elmer," or simply "Elmer." Three letters from 1961 or 1962 are undated and placed in a separate folder.

Keywords

1959-12-22

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Tuesday Noon
22 December 59

Dear Mom and Dad,

Don't think we dropped in a hole. We just been on duty until I thought I'd drop over. The Queen of Libya has her damned operation and we have specialized her and the King under American & Libyan guard and are still doing maid service 10 deep post operative. If Ike Eisenhower knew what we are being subjected to to hold this base over here, he'd have another heart attack. I can't believe he knows what's going on over here or he'd say "leave it to the Libyans and come on home!"

I'm sitting here waiting for Maj. Meekal to call me whether I'm to be given permission to work 11-7 tonight with her majesty. I was supposed to be off, but, instead, I'm to relieve the 11-7 nurse for one night only but it serves to knock my 4 deep off in a row that she had promised me. We had our chance of Christmas or New Year's time off. I asked for Christmas - Most everyone else wanted New Year's - so I was to have today, Wed, Thurs & Christmas off - Now I only get Thurs. & Christmas unless she takes that too.

-2-

There's been very little time off
duty for letter writing this week
because I've moved to another
room. Ray got me some paint
and we painted the floors
in the room & bathroom. It's
just across the hall from my
old room, but it's an odd room
so it has a little more awkward
wall space and is arranged better.
Ray helped me with flowers and
move all the heavy furniture
and all my junk. It's a geom
around the house - thinks I can't
do anything pertaining to hard
work - so I guess he get used
to having help. He quits when I get
to the pickling stage of cleaning
out drawers and dusting & placing
little things - he grabs a beer
and heads for the television
set in the day room. We put up
our Christmas tree Sunday afternoon
and decorated it Sunday night. He
was very helpful - put it in a
bucket of sand & rocks - strung
the lights and then suddenly he
got this pained expression on
his face and he confessed
that he just couldn't stand to
put on the bells and tinsel
and icecicles so I made him
sit & watch and I had a marvelous
time doing it all by myself - and
I was wondering how I was going to
make him do it my way! So it worked

out just right.

He's flying today - shooting at our newest type of aerial target - the dart. He was really excited about it because lots of the fellows in his outfit haven't been able to hit it, so he was eager to try it today. I can hardly wait to hear his score tonight - He should be here by 2 - 2:30. Then we're going to paint the floor of his new room. He's been waiting for a Col. to move so he could have this room with a 'private bath. The Colonel left yesterday so we hope to get this done & him moved in by Christmas too. He's in his same B.O.2. so it's not too far down the hall from his old room - I told him this is one way to make us clean house.

I got a card from Patsy yesterday. She may be at your house by now! If so, tell her she should thank the powers that be each day that she left when she did. This place is really charging fast. Major Nechaeva practically has to ask our new Colonel's permission to go to the bathroom. Ridiculous, but true.

Tell Patsy I think Lt. Saxon and her fellow are breaking their engagement. I don't know it for sure, but Liz is not wearing her ring and she said she'd quit writing - he's threatening to rejoin the Air Force instead of going to school.

Mom, I sent Jay a radio, Helen
a silver tray with coasters to match
with a "C" on each. Jeff, Joe and
Jill will be matching in little
leather trousers (grey with red
& green trim) & white blouses.
Their gifts should be there by now -
if the boat went out on time. Your
gift was on its way at the same
time. Daddy was airmailed because
I got it late. So he may get his
first - it's not much for either
of you - it's so hard to buy over
here - so don't expect me
anything. I don't need anything.
When I get home I'll pick up
a few things & mail them back.
I need a new pair of duty shoes -
for I hate these Red Cross shoes
they sell here. I can last till January^{tho}.
I got the hose & Thanks a doddle -
I was down to seams & I had
drastic. Keep the ticket & I'll pay.

Well it's noon and my tummy
is lank; so I'll hunt a sandwich
I'm dead with a cold. The rainy
season is here and we can't go
off base much of the time. We
are below sea level & these awful
roads fill up to car window level
in no time. One of my Curlian nurses
had to climb out her car window &
swim the other day on the way to
work. Jolly eh?
I'll stop for now - wish I could see
you for Christmas - it's my first away since